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July 20, 1981

POLAND: New Politburo

The newly elected Politburo appears to reflect the moderate views of party leader Kania. [REDACTED]

Most of the members appear to be centrists who favor reform. At least three of the members, however, including one of the newly elected workers, are conservatives. For the first time, the Polish Politburo will include a woman, a worker who reportedly belongs to Solidarity. [REDACTED]

Newcomers dominate the Politburo, holding 11 of the 15 positions. The four members from the previous Politburo--Kania, moderate Barcikowski, conservative Olszowski, and Premier Jaruzelski--and the two newly elected members who are government ministers bring national-level experience to the leadership. Counterbalancing them are three provincial party leaders, two local party activists, two workers, and two academics. Under new party rules, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Internal Affairs will resign their posts to serve on the enlarged Politburo. [REDACTED]

Current plans call for the congress to end today, but that timetable may not hold. In addition to other business, the delegates still must approve new party statutes. [REDACTED]

The new leadership will have to deal almost immediately with the challenge posed by Baltic coast dockworkers and employees of the national airline LOT, who have scheduled strikes on Thursday and Friday, respectively. Transportation workers in Warsaw and other Solidarity union members have expressed support for the LOT strikers. [REDACTED]

Both strikes still can be avoided, but the regime appears to regard the threatened LOT strike as a major challenge. At issue is whether the government or the workers have the right to appoint the director of a state-run organization. If the strike takes place, Jaruzelski might order the military to take over the operations of the civil airline. [REDACTED]

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Jaruzelski may have had such a move in mind when he publicly warned yesterday that the authorities would "fulfill their constitutional duties to save the state" if "anarchy were to deepen." Such an action could lead to widespread sympathy strikes and a new confrontation between Solidarity and the government. [REDACTED]

Soviet Reaction to Elections

Soviet commentary remains sparse, but Moscow has made clear its lack of enthusiasm over the retention of Kania and has stepped up its criticism of alleged Western interference in Polish affairs. President Brezhnev's message to Kania yesterday omitted the customary compliments and was from him alone, rather than from the entire Central Committee as usual. While expressing confidence that Soviet-Polish friendship would continue to grow, the message did not refer to Kania's role in the process. [REDACTED]

On Saturday a veteran TASS commentator claimed that attempts by the West to interfere in Polish affairs and thereby weaken the entire socialist community had increased during the congress; he asserted that the USSR would not permit such schemes to succeed. [REDACTED]

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